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TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [BO](#)

SUBJECT: BELARUS' NOMINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMAN OF COURAGE

REF: STATE 12871

¶1. (U) Post has the honor to nominate Irina Kozulina for the Secretary of State's first International Women of Courage Award for

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her work on behalf of political prisoners and her promotion of breast cancer awareness in Belarus. She stands as a vital national figure representing both human rights and health interests.

¶2. (U) Despite intense pressure from the authoritarian government, Kozulina organized a wide public campaign to release her husband, former presidential candidate Aleksandr Kozulin, from prison after he was sentenced to five and one-half years in jail for leading a peaceful demonstration. She heads the movement "Freedom for Kozulin", which advocates not only for the release of her husband but all political prisoners in Belarus. As a result of her tireless efforts, the situation of political prisoners in Belarus has received much attention, both abroad and within the country.

¶3. (U) In a country where one can be sentenced to prison for providing "false" information about Belarus to foreigners, Kozulina traveled throughout Belarus and abroad to educate a domestic audience and the international community about political prisoners and the human rights situation in Belarus and garner international support for Belarusian human rights activists. In January 2007, Kozulina traveled to Poland to promote a documentary that she helped to create, "On the Frontline of Truth," about activists who have been sent to prison for political reasons under the Lukashenko regime. She serves as a beacon for other political prisoners and their families.

¶4. (U) Her heroism and service in the cause of human rights is matched by a deep personal commitment to women's health issues. As a breast cancer victim and survivor, Kozulina is passionate about increasing breast cancer awareness in Belarus. In a culture where most hesitate to discuss personal health problems openly, Kozulina has sought to publicize breast cancer prevention through her work as deputy chief of the NGO "In the Rays of Hope." She has attended international conferences on breast cancer awareness including the 2006 Mission Conference of the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Institute in Washington, D.C.

¶5. (SBU) Her contact and biographical information is as follows:

Irina Kozulina
Deputy Chair, In Rays of Hope
Wife of imprisoned opposition leader Alexander Kozulin
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¶6. (U) Jennifer Roque (roquejl@state.gov; +375-17-210-1283) is the officer responsible for following women's issues at post. For any questions prior to March 5, please contact Steve Gillen (gillensg@state.gov; +375-17-210-1283).

